

**REMARKS**

**I. Status of the Claims**

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-12, 20-23 and 34 are pending.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-11, 20 and 34 are allowed.

By this Amendment, claims 6, 12 and 21-23 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Upon entry of this Amendment, Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-11, 20 and 34 will be the pending claims in this application. No new matter has been introduced. Entry and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

**II. Response to the Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e)**

Claims 6, 12 and 21-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,256,391 to Ishiguro et al.

Claims 6, 12 and 21-23 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, and allowance of the application.

Serial No. 09/412,900  
§ 1.111 Amendment

Docket No. 1232-4577

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims and allowance of this application.

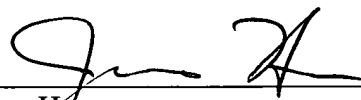
**AUTHORIZATION**

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Preliminary Amendment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4577.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4577.

Respectfully submitted,  
MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P.

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By:   
James Hwa  
Registration No. 42,680  
(202) 857-7887 Telephone  
(202) 857-7929 Facsimile

Correspondence Address:  
MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P.  
3 World Financial Center  
New York, NY 10281-2101